



# SCHOOL BUS, INC.

5100 W. 8th Street • Sioux Falls, SD 57107 • (605) 334-6644 • Fax (605) 334-4245

Steven C. Hey, President  
Jim W. Shafer, Manager

## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT"** **JULY NEWSLETTER**

### **Driver Training**

Please keep in mind the training schedules for the Train the Trainer Classes and for the driver training that will be held in July and August.

Train the trainer classes are scheduled in:

Pierre on July 21<sup>st</sup>

Sioux Falls on July 26<sup>th</sup>

Rapid City on July 28<sup>th</sup>

The following is the current driver training dates and places.

Wed. , July 27	10:00 am -3:00 pm (MST)	Batesland, SD	Batesland School
Fri., July 29	9:00 am -1:00 pm	Mission, SD	Bus Shop

<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Mon., Aug. 1	8:00 am -12:00 pm	Huron, SD	High School
Tues., Aug. 2	9:00 am -1:00 pm	Mobridge, SD Scherr Howe Arena	
Tues., Aug. 2	5:00 pm -9:00 pm (MST)	Bison, SD	Bison School
Wed., Aug. 3	1:00 pm--5:00 pm (MST)	Kadoka, SD	Kadoka School
Thurs., Aug. 4	5:30 pm-9:30 pm	Milbank, SD	Otter Tail Power Co.
Fri., Aug. 5	8:00 am -12:00 pm	Watertown, SD	Lake Area Tech Inst.
Mon., Aug. 8	8:00 am -12:00 pm	Kimball, SD	Kimball School
Mon., Aug. 8	4:00 pm -8:00 pm	Murdo, SD	Murdo School
Tues., Aug. 9	9:00 am-1:00 pm	Ipswich, SD	Ipswich School
Tues., Aug. 9	4:00 pm-8:00 pm	Aberdeen, SD	Ramada Inn
Wed., Aug. 10	8:00 am-12:00 pm	Brookings, SD	Brookings Multi Dist.
Wed., Aug. 10	4:00 pm -8:00 pm	Madison, SD	High School
Thurs. Aug. 11	8:00 am -12:30pm 5:00 pm -9:00 pm	Sioux Falls, SD Hartford, SD	Roosevelt High School West Central School

Fri., Aug. 12	9:00 am -1:00 pm	Clear Lake, SD	Clear Lake School
Fri, Aug. 12	5:00 pm-9:00 pm	Sisseton, SD	High School
Mon., Aug. 15	5:30 pm-9:30 pm	Webster, SD	Day Co. Court House
Thurs., Aug. 18	5:30 pm -9:30 pm	Clark, SD	Playhouse Restaurant

For more information please contact Harlows at 1-888-419-4023, School Bus, Inc. at 605-334-6644 or the state web site at <http://doe.sd.gov/oatq/transportation/index.asp>

## **EPA Announces 2005 Clean School Bus Grant Competition**

Applications are now being accepted for the \$7.5 million available to upgrade school bus fleets to reduce emissions. EPA anticipates awarding 20-30 grants to school districts for retrofit, replacement and cleaner fuel projects. The maximum award amount is \$725,000, with an average award of \$200,000 - \$300,000. Applicants must contribute at least a 5% match for these grants.

Because of the language in the Congressional appropriation for this program, only public school districts are eligible to apply. EPA has worked with NSTA, however, to encourage contracted districts to take advantage of the grants. They specifically added language under Scope of Project that says applications will be accepted from public school districts that intend to establish subgrants to commercial school bus companies that provide their transportation service to retrofit or replace buses owned by the commercial company. Furthermore, they specify that neither participation in such a subgrant nor acceptance by the school district of grant funds is intended to establish any property rights or affect any liability with respect to the vehicles modified or purchased under the grant.

Contractors are encouraged to talk with their customers about applying for funding to retrofit your buses. (Replacement priorities are pre-1977 buses, so it's unlikely that you will be eligible for replacement funds.) The deadline for application is July 24; EPA asks for an "intent to apply" by June 22. You can download the application instructions and forms at <http://www.epa.gov/oar/grants/05-13.pdf>.

## **FMCSA Proposes Expanded Registration Requirements**

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to combine four current identification and registration systems for interstate motor carriers into one Unified Registration System. In doing so, the agency is also extending the registration requirements to carriers who are currently exempt from some or all of them, including school bus companies.

As you know, school bus contractors that provide interstate activity trip transportation, as well as those that do interstate charter transportation for non-student groups, must apply for a USDOT number and comply with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Under current law, if you only transport students and all your interstate trips begin and end at a school, you are not required to obtain Operating Authority (an MC number) in addition to the DOT number. That means you are also not required to provide insurance filings and designate a Process Agent.

The NPRM proposes to eliminate the Operating Authority and two other registration categories, and use only the USDOT registration for all carriers. The requirements of the other categories would be included in the USDOT registration, and those would apply to for-hire carriers who are currently exempt from Operating Authority and to Private Carriers of Passengers, such as private schools, church groups, YMCAs, etc. They would also apply to private companies that provide interstate transit service under contract to government agencies under an FTA grant.

### **What Does It Mean To You?**

According to the NPRM, the Unified Registration System would apply to every motor carrier required to register with DOT and to all entities currently subject to the FMCSRs. That includes all school bus companies who provide interstate activity trips. The effect on your operations includes:

A filing fee of \$200. The fee to obtain Operating Authority is currently \$300. FMCSA proposes to reduce the fee and extend it to carriers currently exempt. (This and all other fees are waived for carriers operating under FTA grants.)

Insurance filing. All carriers will be required to file proof of financial responsibility (\$5 million for buses with a seating capacity of more than 15). The filing must be made by your insurer, not by you. There will be a new \$10 fee for each filing. FMCSA will accept individual self-insurance if approved, but not group self-insurance. The fee for qualification of self-insurance is \$4,200, with an additional \$500 fee for quarterly monitoring.

Designation of Process Agent. You will have to designate a person in each state in which you operate, or through which you pass, to receive any legal notices on your behalf. You can make a blanket designation for all states through an association or corporation recognized by FMCSA. The filing fee is \$10, and the fee charged by the process agent is \$40.

There are other provisions, as well, including the elimination of the ability to transfer operating authority. Currently, if you acquire a company that has operating authority, you can transfer that authority to your name. The NPRM would eliminate that ability, and require that you apply for a new registration instead.

### **NHTSA Issues Third Warning on Vans**

For the third time in the past four years, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has issued an advisory warning consumers of the dangers in using 15-passenger vans.

A new NHTSA study found that 74% of all 15-passenger vans had significantly mis-inflated tires. Research has consistently shown that improperly inflated tires increase the likelihood of a rollover crash in large vans. The risk of rollover increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases. Vans with ten or more occupants have a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times that of vans with fewer than five occupants.

NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge said that van users can reduce their risk by ensuring that drivers are trained and experienced; all occupants wear safety belts; tires are checked at least weekly; and no loads are placed on the roof of the vehicle.

The advisory concludes with the following statement: "While Federal law prohibits the sale of 15-passenger vans for the school-related transport of high school age and younger students, no such prohibition exists for vehicles to transport college students or other passengers. An interpretation of this Federal law can be found at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/interps/files/17730.drn.htm>.

### **Senate Committee Approves Head Start Bill**

The Senate Health, Education, and Pensions Committee approved a \$7.2 billion Head Start reauthorization bill prior to the Memorial Day Congressional recess. The bill passed via voice vote with little debate.

The bill provides 7.2 billion for Fiscal Year 2006, \$7.5 billion for Fiscal Year 2007 and \$7.8 billion for Fiscal Year 2008. The bill also allows appropriators to set aside necessary funding for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010. The House bill, which was also passed out of Committee earlier this month, authorizes \$6.8 billion for Fiscal Year 2006 and lets appropriators determine funds for the next four fiscal years.

Both bills implement recommendations by the General Accountability Office (GAO) calling for more competition for Head Start grants. The Senate bill requires grant recipients to compete for their financing every five years and allows successful programs to receive priority.

### **Recalls**

#### **IC Corporation AmTran FE**

Years: 6/12/92 to 3/3/2004

Recall # 04304. The driver's seat involved in this recall are manufactured by CE White and mounted on a pedestal type base only. The plate of the upper pedestal mounting of the driver seat pedestal, which provides the mounting surface for the seat, may develop cracks. The cracks could progress to the extent that the seat becomes unstable and distracts the driver, or in some cases the seat could separate from the base. This could possibly result in personal injury or death in the event of an accident.

Blue Bird All American, Conventional, Minibird, Microbird, Vision, and TC2000, model years 2002-2006, sold or registered in 20 Northeast and Midwest states. In

extremely cold weather, the microswitches used internally to position the stop sign in the open and closed positions may malfunction, causing the sign to open or close in an improper position, or not to open at all. Blue Bird will notify owners in June and will replace the original switch with a switch pack that is not sensitive to extreme cold.

U.S. Bus Sturdibus and Universe, model years 2004-2005. Certain buses were manufactured with improper or missing welds on the 30" wide barrier support, which fails to comply with FMVSS 222. U.S. Bus will notify owners in June and will inspect the barriers and repair the welds as necessary.

U.S. Bus Sturdibus, model year 2005. Certain buses fail to comply with FMVSS 217, Window Retention. In the event of a crash, passenger contact with the window could cause the window to dislodge from its gasket/seal. U.S. Bus has not provided a remedy or notification schedule yet.

International 3200 Chassis, model year 2006, equipped with air brakes. The push rod that connects the brake pedal to the brake rod was manufactured incorrectly and could break under certain load conditions. International began notification on June 3; dealers will replace the push rods.

Ford E350 and E450 vans, model year 2004-2005, equipped with 6.0L diesel engines. Certain vans may experience stalling without warning while driving, and engine may or may not restart. Dealers will upgrade the fuel injection control module wire harness and/or install a new injection control pressure sensor. Notification of owners will begin on July 5.

The information in this newsletter is distributed for information purposes only. It does not represent legal advice.